

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for inducing insulin gene expression in cultured ~~endocrine pancreas~~ β -cells pancreatic cells, the method comprising the steps of:

(i) expressing a recombinant NeuroD/BETA2 polynucleotide and a recombinant PDX-1 polynucleotide in ~~endocrine pancreas~~ β -cells pancreatic cells that have been cultured under conditions such that the β -cells pancreatic cells are in contact with other cells in the culture; and

(ii) contacting the cells with a GLP-1 receptor agonist, thereby inducing insulin gene expression in the β -cells pancreatic cells.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the GLP-1 receptor agonist is a GLP-1 analog.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the GLP-1 receptor agonist has an amino acid sequence of a naturally occurring peptide.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the GLP-1 receptor agonist is GLP-1, exendin-3, or exendin-4.

5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the cells are cultured as aggregates in suspension.

6. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the β -cells cells are ~~human~~ β -cells.

7. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the β -cells cells express a recombinant oncogene.

8. (Currently amended) The method of claim 7, wherein the β -cells cells express more than one recombinant oncogene.

9. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the β -cells cells express a recombinant telomerase gene.

10. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the β -cells are β lox5 cells.

11. (Canceled)

12. (Currently amended) A stable culture of endocrine pancreas β -cells pancreatic cells, wherein the β -cells pancreatic cells are in contact with other cells in the culture, wherein the β -cells pancreatic cells express a recombinant PDX-1 polynucleotide and a recombinant NeuroD/BETA2 polynucleotide, and wherein insulin gene expression is stimulated in the β -cells pancreatic cells when exposed to an effective amount of a GLP-1 receptor agonist.

13. (Original) The culture of claim 12, wherein the GLP-1 receptor agonist is a GLP-1 analog.

14. (Original) The culture of claim 12, wherein the GLP-1 receptor agonist has an amino acid sequence of a naturally occurring peptide.

15. (Original) The culture of claim 14, wherein the GLP-1 receptor agonist is GLP-1, exendin-3, or exendin-4.

16. (Original) The culture of claim 12, wherein the cells are cultured as aggregates in suspension.

17. (Original) The culture of claim 12, wherein the β -cells cells are human β -cells.

18. (Original) The culture of claim 12, wherein the β -cells cells express a recombinant oncogene.

19. (Original) The culture of claim 18, wherein the β -cells cells express more than one recombinant oncogene.

20. (Original) The culture of claim 12, wherein the β -cells cells express a recombinant telomerase gene.

21. (Original) The culture of claim 12 17, wherein the β -cells are β lox5 cells.

22-30. (Canceled)

31. (Original) An endocrine pancreas β -cell comprising a recombinant PDX-1 polynucleotide and a recombinant NeuroD/BETA2 polynucleotide.

32. (Original) The β -cell of claim 31, wherein the β -cell is a human β -cell.

33. (Original) The β -cell of claim 31, wherein the β -cell expresses a recombinant oncogene.

34. (Original) The β -cell of claim 33, wherein the β -cell expresses more than one recombinant oncogene.

35. (Original) The β -cell of claim 31, wherein the β -cell expresses a recombinant telomerase gene.

36. (New) The method of claim 6, wherein the β -cells are human β -cells.

37. (New) The method of claim 17, wherein the β -cells are human β -cells.